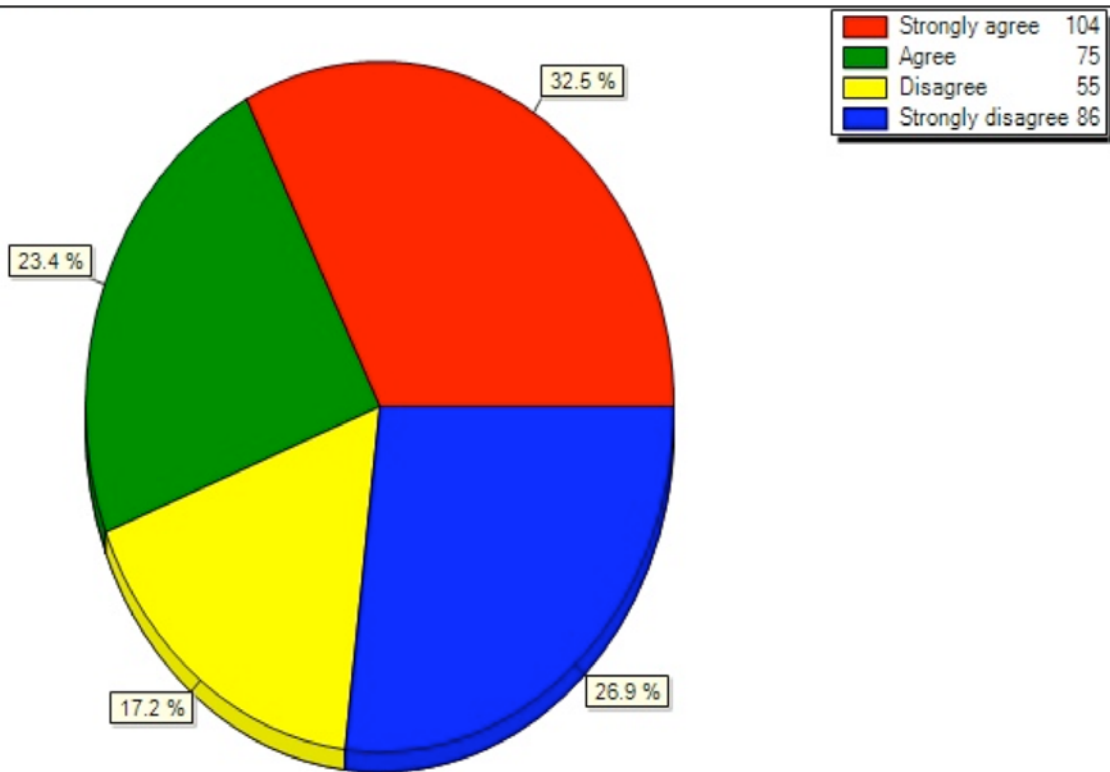


Health Care Reform Survey Results & Analysis

Executive Summary

This report contains a detailed statistical analysis of the results to the survey titled *Health Care Reform Survey*. The results analysis includes answers from all respondents who took the survey from Thursday, September 24, 2009 to Sunday, October 04, 2009; 320 completed responses were received to the survey during this time.

If you could reform the nation's health care system, you would favor a single government-run system to cover every American



Comments

Editor's Note: Comments were edited for grammar and style, and sorted into Agree, Disagree, or Other for ease of reading.

Agree
A nation of such wealth should not have 40 million uninsured citizens! The current system is faulty and needs drastic overhaul.
We need an expanded "Medicare" to cover everybody. Money is not an issue. It wasn't one for bailed-out banks, or wars, and it shouldn't be for health care. We should not give insurance companies government money to administer any plan.
Health care is a basic human right. Disparities in health care that stem from a profit-driven system inordinately affect the poorest, and drive the sickest into poverty. With poverty comes the crowded living conditions, violence, stress, and pollution that further impair health. A single-payer system would not only improve each individual's chance of accessing medical care but would also provide financial incentives to government to address the sickening forces of violence, poverty, and pollution that bring our entire world down.
A government system is probably going to happen eventually anyway, and a single system would be simpler to administer for physician billing offices.
Fraught with peril but I think it is the right thing to do.
What other country in the world has a health care system built around money? It's absurd. So many other nations have a single-payer system that's worked for them. France was given the option of changing their system and refused to do so. People complain that in Canada you have to wait for an appointment. Have you tried to get an appointment here with your doctor lately? It's embarrassing that we can't pull ourselves together to do something so clearly needed. Shame on us all.
A reasonable base insurance (that is government-funded) is needed for every American automatically. The private industry option can continue to provide "red carpet plans" above and beyond the government base for people who continue to prefer procedures or medications that can be delivered now or are not clearly evidence-based. Money saved from decrementing the size of the private insurance industry goes to funding and expanding the professional direct care workforce (eg, nurses, primary care docs/psychiatrists/addictionologists).
While I do support government involvement in the health care industry so as to ensure better access to care, it should only be as an option or portion of health care coverage. I do support a requirement for every American to get health care, to eliminate the "freeloaders." Immigrants need to be addressed (perhaps emergent care only). On the other hand, while the VA system is one shining model that is referred to in terms of very successful government health care (and it is much better than anything in the

<p>civilian world in terms of electronic medical records, access to addiction and mental health services, reduction of doctor shopping, sharing of records to reduce unnecessary duplication of labs and imaging), it still has significant waste on the other side of the equation (entitlement by patients that they "paid their taxes and thus should get whatever they want," heavy on documentation and low on overall volume of patients served per provider, etc).</p>
<p>We need universal coverage that is affordable for even low-income people with parity for mental illnesses and substance abuse, even in small companies.</p>
<p>[This type of system] is working in England, Canada, and in most European countries, and even when there is a change in political parties the health care system remains untouched.</p>
<p>A government-run system that is cost-effective but at the same time will not result in getting necessary treatments/tests delayed due to red tape.</p>
<p>Not necessarily run by the government but definitely controlled/supervised by the government. Like Japan, The Netherlands, Switzerland, France, Germany and England. All are ranked better than us and we spend a total that exceeds the total of all of them. Our life expectancy is less than all of them and the percent of noninsured or underinsured is 10 times the ranking of number 2 on the list. Tom W. Broughton, MD, RWJF, past fellow and past developer of the Division of Community Psychiatry at the Univ. of Washington. Past Pediatrician for 7 years (Univ. of Colo. under Drs. Kemp and Silver). Lets get real and fix a broken and too expensive system.</p>
<p>Would be best way to save money and assure health care for everyone, even illegal immigrants!</p>
<p>Too much waste of money and time dealing with private insurers. Everyone should have the right to be covered by medical insurance.</p>
<p>Similar to other industrialized countries: Canada, Germany, Japan.</p>
<p>Private insurance could reasonably have a place; employer provision of funds would have to be considered as many now are so arranged. So there are questions still to be answered.</p>
<p>I feel it would cover all. Would like it only if freedom of choice of doctors is a part of the plan.</p>
<p>At least the public should have options to pick from. One of them should be government-run to standardize the cost and compete with others.</p>
<p>This is the only way that we can eliminate the overhead and waste that comes from having multiple different insurance companies that have a shared goal of covering the healthy and <i>not</i> covering the sick. This is the only fair way to provide universal coverage, which I believe is a moral imperative for a nation. I've been discussing the health care reform debate with a friend from Germany who is astounded that anyone would question the need for the government to provide universal coverage to all.</p>

This will make the life of every American much better. The current system and the private sector just squeeze everybody for profit. People are not even called persons, they call us "lives." I believe they just shortened the phrase "livestock."

Current system is unsustainable and single-payer or some combo with non-profit insurance is the only way to go. Good examples abound in the EU.

Close to 70 million are not covered; what other options are available for them, taking into consideration the way the health insurance [companies] are behaving?

Rearred Republican, in my salad days of medical school I subscribed to the notion that health care, like every other commodity, should be the responsibility of the individual. For several decades now I have quaffed deep of the more liberal notion that, when each of us has access to affordable health care, we are all better cared for. This does not mean that private insurance should be done away with, any more than it is [in] the UK. But it does mean that a government-sponsored option that anyone can use is an absolute must. We may well not achieve that state this fall, but we will get there, eventually. We have to. James Morrison

I believe that a system modeled on the French and/or English programs could be most effective. Such an effort could coexist with private carriers, making them more competitive, effective, and responsive to the public. Unfortunately, until control is wrested from the pharmaceutical and insurance industries, nothing effective will be done.

[It is the] only ethical and realistic financial way forward.

Much the way Canada operates. The insurance companies make billions now, and I doubt Congress will let go of the lobbyists, unfortunately...

I favor universal coverage, access to reasonably priced health plans for individuals, portability, no exclusions for pre-existing conditions and non-cancelability because of illness onset. I also favor a so-called public option (or several) to provide competition in the private marketplace.

Take the profit out of insuring our health.

Every system has pros and cons. I would model this system after Medicare, which has worked very well for its participants.

It's the only way to truly curve the rising prices and make at least basic medical care available.

A single health care system as the main health insurance regulated by government but with an alternative private health care for those who can foot the bill.

It would be a massive reform but at the end it would be worth it, for every American to know he/she would always have coverage. Always. No gaps with change of jobs; no gaps or waiting period between early retirement and Medicare; no gaps because of job loss. This fear has got to go! After achieving that baseline of government coverage for all, then those who want some form of upgrade/individualization through whatever

means can go for it. They can put the icing on the cake, but at least let everyone get a slice of pound cake.
What we have now is a white-collar organized crime to make the rich richer and to deny services to the poor.
I work at the VA, and I can see the benefits for those in need.
It is way overdue. The current state of health care is hostage to insurance industry greed and has become a thorn in eyes of those who really want to provide state-of-art care for their patients. Of note, even AIG went under in this financial crisis, yet Mr. HMO CEO kept making astronomical numbers of profit and continued its trend of shortchanging patients and doctors. I believe the most effective shortcut to solving the health care fiasco is through allowing doctors to join their patients to sue the insurance companies for denying and circumventing their medical care!
Access to health and healthy life should be an equal opportunity.
Everyone is entitled to the same health care whether it is good or bad. No one should get preferential treatment because of income or position in society.
A single-payer system eliminates most of the financial bureaucracy that is currently in place, e.g., an 800-bed hospital in single-payer Italy has a total of 5 people handling patient accounts and authorizations vs. 30+ people in a 450-bed hospital in the US. And we wouldn't have to feed all the beancounters and benefit-deniers who work for the insurance companies; nor the CEOs, who earn in the 6 or 7 figures between salaries, options, and bonuses—that's all money taken from patient care.
I have become convinced that capitalism has no place in health care. It has created a system where profits trump quality health care for all. It is amoral and shocking that we are one of the wealthiest countries in the world and yet rank 37th in health care for our citizens. Every American deserves acces to health care, just like every American deserves income on which to live in retirement.
[A government-run system] would be the simplest and fairest approach.
I was once a poor single mom, before medical school. I worried most about my kids being sick, and vowed I would never turn away someone I could help, just because they couldn't pay. I believe so strongly that we need universal coverage.
My primary concern with such an option is the time to service but otherwise it appears viable in addressing inequities of service presently encountered
It might take the profit out of it.
A single government system would cover everybody and we would also be able to buy upgrades to the basic insurance (like with car insurance you add extra collision) from private insurers.
This appears to have no chance currently, but is the only option for affordable health care for all.
I would favor a government-run system to cover all Americans who are currently not

insured for health care. Those currently insured, I would favor leaving them alone.
With a single-payer plan, there would still be room for supplemental insurance for those who want it and can afford it, but at least everyone would be covered.
I agree but with strong reservations about the inevitable inefficiency and abuse. However, the failure to provide adequate care for all Americans is a moral travesty. A travesty worsened by the vast profiteering of insurance companies, pharmaceuticals, physicians, and manufacturers. It is not just another business, it is life and death.
I am in favor of health care reform and of the opinion that a meaningful reform must include a universal plan, "the public option," at its core to provide affordable health care coverage for all citizens. I am also of the opinion that citizens should have the option to keep their existing insurance or to obtain their health insurance from the private sector. I think most of the opposition to reform and inclusion of the public option stems from misinformation disseminated by various interest groups in the media and at town hall meetings. I strongly believe that any health care reform without the public option at its center will at the end be a continuation of the status quo; one that will ultimately fail to bring about the real change we need. Mahshid Moradiseresht, MD
USA is the only first-world country without a universal health care system and spends in health care much more than any other country. Where does the extra money go?
Yes, with private, not-for-profit medical groups, competing for quality initiatives bonus money incentives.
The wording of this statement is not a good way to obtain feedback from physicians and is too restrictive. I would agree with having the option, just like Medicare and Medicaid, of a government system when no insurer will touch you with a 10-foot poll. I am for business but would argue that health care companies should all be non-profit entities. This will remove a huge chunk of unnecessary spending on administration.
We need both a private as well as a government-run medical system.
I have concerns about how well the government would run such a massive undertaking; however, private insurance companies have helped to ruin our system.
The way to go is to set things up at a state level so there is more accountability and less chance for fraud. Every state could offer the same basic plan to those without insurance and it would be more manageable.
I would favor a purely government run system and a purely private one, just like in Great Britain. Health care is wonderful in GB precisely because you can get specialty and unusual services privately, and more standard services publicly. My wife travels to England from the States to be treated because overall the health system is better there. (She lives primarily in GB but spends a substantial amount of time in both places) By the way, I am a psychiatrist and my wife has the very best insurance money can buy in the USA. Her treatment is simply better in Britain because of its separation of public and private services. She (and now I) know that the US is "falling between 2 stools," confusing public and private. It's ridiculous. The Canadian system is terrible, as well,

because it also mixes private and public care. By the way, the private care available in GB is far cheaper than in America because of competition from the public system. And my wife has two very complicated illnesses and one very serious one, requiring profoundly careful medical care to keep her functioning.

I prefer a government-run system to coexist with private insurance companies.

It would need to be optional; people should have the ability to opt out and buy private health insurance, if they so desire. The system would need to be less liable to fraud and abuse but still allow patients to get needed care and medications. Should be run by doctors and not by bureaucrats. Good luck!!

I like Obama's idea of keeping private if you have it, but assuring that others have national insurance.

I think a parallel system, enlarging the framework of the US Public Health System, could be done without coercion. Let the market compete, and the government hire physicians who want a "job" but who do not want to work at the VA. All of the non-insured, underinsured, or illegals could go there and free up space for other patients to continue with traditional care providers.

A recent article on the Canadian system indicates a combo of government-run and private insurances alternatives seem to work best.

I would favor a blend of private and public options. Or, if a single payer would be tried, we should consider a non-government run system first. I am not sure we are ready for a truly government-run single payer. It may ultimately be the best form of health care, but we need to evolve toward it, and not jump that far in the current reform attempts.

We need both private as well as government-run medical system.

The way to go is to set things up at a state level so there is more accountability and less chance for fraud. Every state could offer the same basic plan to those without insurance and it would be more manageable.

Disagree

Unfortunately, as much as I would like coverage for all, my experience with Medicare is so frustrating and negative I would not trust a government-run program.

A federal system will have the efficiency of FEMA, the compassion of the DMV, and the waiting times of Cash for Clunkers. No system is perfect, but let's not destroy what we have. Everyone who really needs care gets it in the U.S. already. They just show up in ERs, which is inefficient. It's easier to fix that problem than overhauling the entire system. I won't work as a government employee with some nitwit bureaucrat telling me how to practice medicine.

Have you ever seen the government run anything efficiently and cost-effectively? Say no more.

A single-payer source would limit the immediate care some patients will require. This also will take away any incentive a physician may have to give the best care, thus eliminating competition for the good physicians to thrive. This also will lead to rationalizing of health care and leaves the patient without a choice but to take what they can get, which I believe goes against our first oath, which is to do no harm. A single-payer, government-run health care [plan] will only lead to more bureaucracy, which we don't need any more. I once spent 30 minutes on the phone with the state Medicaid and Medicare program to try to get my patient a medication outside of the approved psychotropic regimen and still no avail, I could not get it approved. The health care debate seems to be missing the point in that the government should just stay out of the care of a patient and physician. We need to work on tort reform, prevention, EMR and decrease the practice of defensive medicine to bring down cost and improve the health care system

Continue the present system.

There should be choice based on health status and health needs.

I don't believe in a single government-run system. It's equivalent to a communist government-run system.

Theoretically, a single government plan sounds great—health care for everyone—but all you have to do is look at the Canadian system and speak with the many Canadians who come to the US to obtain health care to realize that the grass is always greener on the opposite side of the fence. A single-payer system would provide many Americans with less choice and more expensive care with less quality. Based on current HMO restrictions, quality health care can be difficult to obtain based on health insurance benefits. I think that Americans should be careful of what they vote for and who they elect to vote for them in Congress.

This takes away any personal responsibility and will worsen health care outcomes for individual patients over the long run.

Although there are pros and cons to a government-run system, I believe the system has more against it. The VA, for example, has many strong qualities that can be measured empirically (med disbursement, equipment, etc) but the intangibles such as actual quality of care fall through the cracks.

Let's not go down that fascist trail.

The government's role is regulation, not to take over the job. I don't believe the government can do a better job than other organization.

That is dictatorship or imperialism. Dependency on such systems does not foster individual responsibility and personal growth. The whole purpose of this life (meaningful life) is to learn to respond to daily challenges with creativity and ingenuity. Otherwise, go find a stone and go hide under it.

A single, government-run system is likely to be too cumbersome, inefficient. However, a top-flight consultancy system appeals to me.

I prefer a health-care savings plan where each person can make his or her own decisions. I do support tort reform, perhaps some sort of no-fault system.
Yeah, let's go the way of Britain and Canada, shall we? It is amazing to me that there is any support for such an insane scheme!
Medicare/Tricare/Medicaid are government entitlements, not insurance. If a patient opts to go "out of network," you as a doctor must take 125% of the Medicare/Tricare visit or if the doctor is "not authorized," then the patient must pay everything...there is no reimbursement. If a single-payer does the same thing, I don't want it.
From what I have seen in countries that have this, the care becomes mediocre at best and people who can buy additional private insurance do.
No. I would offer a public version, though, so that all Americans could be covered. In addition, I strongly believe we need to integrate mental health into primary care. See the White River Model Primary mental health care co-located immediate collaborative care model. Published in General Hospital Psychiatry by Andrew Pomerantz, MD.
Once you make health care a right, it will inevitably be abused and quality will severely suffer. It will be used most responsibly and cost kept down most when people individually pay for it. This will also incentivize preventive care like nothing else as it will help the individual pocketbook. We need to return to health insurance, paying for insurance against what you can't afford to lose...not health care. With health care for all, there is no incentive on the part of patients or MDs to save, guaranteeing the need for a huge bureaucracy to manage all. We should be discussing how all should pay much more out of pocket for their health care. My wife is a dialysis patient, and at my income, I should pay \$20-25,000 deductible every year, before the almost bankrupt Medicare system picks up any of the cost. It is unconscionable that we are trillions in debt while others work at minimum wage to support millions on SS and Medicare.
It isn't working anywhere and leads to rationing and lack of physician autonomy.
This country clearly needs health care reform. I do not think this can be done without meaningful tort reform. I do believe there should be a greater emphasis on preventive and primary care strategies, and less "defensive medicine" practices. I don't have the answer, but in this country, I don't believe single government-run system is the ideal.
Health care reform: Yes. The "main" problem: Insurance companies. The solution: Single system: No. Government system: No. Government overseeing a major health insurance reform: Yes.
The country has no experience in a government-run system. The changes have to be done slowly by implementing the system in one state for several years, getting real-life experience, and expanding this experience to the whole country.
The government does nothing well as evidenced by Medicaid/Medicare. Also, there should be choice and if there is a government-run option it will knock out private insurance.
I would prefer a government-supervised program, much as what Germany has had for

over a century. It doesn't have to be run by the government.

I believe physicians should work for and be paid by patients, not insurers, HMOs, or the government.

History tells me anything that is run by the government is run poorly and ends up becoming a failure. We cannot afford to allow our health care system to be destroyed by bureaucrats who think a change just for the sake of changing is good.

The government is incapable of efficiently running anything. Such a system has ruined medical care everywhere else in the road (except for the elites who exempt themselves or can afford differently).

I think the best single article on reform ideas is that of David Goldhill in the September Atlantic magazine, <http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200909/health-care>.

They've already mismanaged Medicare and Medicaid into future bankruptcy. Fix those entities that are not working well, and allow things to thrive that are working. EMR is completely unaffordable to those in private practice. Tort reform is a must.

Must have choices.

A single government-run system would be a complete disaster for the health care in the U.S. and probably the whole world. I came from a country that has government-run health care, which was a complete joke. There, every time there was an "important" personality who needed serious health care the government would send that person to the U.S. for the best care. There is a reason we have the best health care in the world and that is called "competition" and despite all the current government regulations we are still a semi free health system. If anything, our health care system needs much more deregulation to cut the cost. To give you an example, on my 20-bed inpatient psychiatric unit, JCACHO mandated that all the doorknobs to be changed because "it was a suicide risk." Maybe it was, but it was one in 100 million risk, and the "special doorknobs" cost \$25,000 to be installed. And they are wondering why health care is expensive and why we cannot afford to treat the poor. Government interference in anything is the real problem behind the rise in cost in all industries, especially health care.

Government has proven time and time again its inability to manage anything efficiently! I wouldn't trust them with my health and that of my family.

I think we need to unbundle this mess a bit slowly. If we could start with tort reform, an insurance cooperative so people can shop, a universal insurance form, no canceling of policies based on health issues, increasing funding for public clinics and hospitals who take care of the uninsured, and making the fees insurance companies pay for care equal across the board for large group practices, small groups, and solo physicians. Allow patients to bring own medicines into hospitals so their aspirin will not cost well over \$1 for one tablet. If that can get done then there is a considerable wedge for the following work on reform that can be done later.

After 25 years of treating patients all day every day, I believe now as I did when I first

opened my practice—the best quality medical care takes place when each physician works directly for each patient, with no intermediaries. Each patient needs to pay his or her fee for service. This ensures the patient's active attention and investment in their medical care. It also keeps each physician on his or her toes, as poor performance results in patients going elsewhere. I think the role of the government could be in providing a safety net for catastrophic coverage in case of very severe, dire, and extremely expensive care. Alan Koenigsberg, MD. Plano, TX

Are you crazy? It doesn't work in the UK and even though over 50% of income is taxed, if you can rub 2 nickels together, you go private. My internist is a Brit and they missed a UTI, which turned into a brain abscess, which he diagnosed over the phone—100 miles to the nearest CT scan and they had to pay for it all out of pocket. Why do you think the Canadians come here? Paperwork is bad enough now—would only get worse. Less care which would cost more. You want a \$40k a year doctor, you get a \$40k a year doctor.

Judging by the other government-run program. Medicare compensation for the participating provider is ridiculously low. Private insurance drops to Medicare levels to pay out-of-pocket up to Medicare levels, which are a joke. I see Medicare patients as a pro bono service but I cannot do this any more.

The government does not manage anything well and the bureaucracy cost is added to health care. People should have more say in medical care and have some “skin in the game” to control unnecessary medical care.

The current system is broken and expensive. A single government-run system would be worse in terms of quality of care and delivery of care and would likely be more expensive as well.

I don't think the government should run 1/6 of the economy when health care is projected to be twice that by 2030. Will they run it or simply sub it out to 5 of the big third-party carriers? I can't get my claims processed via Medicaid and Medicare on time—sometimes takes 6 to 12 months. I would expect the same from a bigger system.

Medicare is a single government-run health care system. I believe it is poorly run, wasteful, and I have experienced arbitrary withholding of benefits by its regulations and arbitrary reduction of payments for my services. I believe a government-run health care extension for every American will exacerbate costs (see CBO reports) and will result in ultimate reduction of services and further lowering of U.S. health care delivery.

I support free market and freedom of choice. While I strongly support a public option, I do not support nationalized health care. Our system works for the most part. We just need to fix it. Not toss it out.

Barrack Obama is a malignant narcissist with no real experience and should not make a single-payer system.

That would be a monopoly. That would be a government-run program, which would be full of roadblocks, inefficient, and time-consuming. Moreover, it does not fit with our policy of competition and would increase the costs and reduce the quality of service.

It will be a big failure and delay everything, including access to treatment.
This would be huge mistake for America and doctors.
I believe in health care reform but a "single" government-run system is a frightening statement.
I feel having the government in health care would give the government even more excuses to interfere in the lives of private citizens. We already have too much government as it is.
What the majority of citizens and lawmakers in both parties do not understand, it seems, is that the demise of our health care system began with the implementation of managed care. We not too long ago (20-25 years) had one of the top 1-3 health care systems in the world. What managed care did was to take the decision-making in the treatment of patients out of the hands of the "trained", eg. the doctors, and placed that decision-making in the treatment of patients into the hands of untrained bureaucracies in the HMOs and insurance companies. This appears from my experience in practice to have snowballed out of control. I fear, that with the implementation of single government-run system, the decision-making in the treatment of patients will encounter an even larger and controlling bureaucracy leading to a further decline of our health care system. (Please review closely the health care systems in countries who have implemented this type of system, and on the whole, these government-run systems have failed the patients.) I know this firsthand from family members in Europe who have to deal with this type of system. Ultimately, until the decisions regarding patient care are put back into the hands of the "trained", whatever system is created will create further demise of a once-top notch health care system.
Terrible idea.
A single, government-run system is likely to be too cumbersome, inefficient. However, a top-flight consultancy system appeals to me.

Other
There are many possible models that I can imagine, which means we need more discussion, but first we must set the ground rules that will guide this discussion.
Private insurance could reasonably have a place; employer provision of funds would have to be considered as many now are so arranged. So there are questions still to be answered.
I would recommend that there be work done to calculate the costs of covering everyone privately and extending such coverage to all Americans along with special rules such not allowing "pre-existing" clauses.
I think the best single article on reform ideas is that of David Goldhill in the September Atlantic magazine, http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200909/health-care .

If I could reform the system my focus would shift to each individual's responsibility to strive for and maintain good health. Most of the country's top health problems could be drastically reduced if we would be more nutritionally conscious, physically active, and responsible in the consumption of alcohol.